



News from the Chief Executive

April rolls by and many of the golfing population in the UK are spurred into action by The Masters on the television and the prospect of longer, warmer days. In my part of the world, Yorkshire, I hope that Spring also means some drier days, there has been no apparent shortage of rainfall in this area over the last few months! Augusta looked immaculate, as you would expect, with the Azaleas adding that splash of colour and a lengthened course testing the competitors to the fullest. Congratulations to Brad Owen, the Superintendent, Jim Evans, his Deputy, and the rest of the greenkeeping staff not to mention a worthy winner in Phil Mickelson, who in my opinion is a good ambassador for the game.

Having been privileged enough to visit Augusta National Golf Club earlier in the year while attending the GCSAA Conference and Exhibition I was able to appreciate how such spectacular results can be achieved, unlike the myriads of golfers who will now expect their own course to be suddenly transformed into Augusta like condition. Although this will inevitably put pressure on many Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers in this country, and around the world, it is never the less important that we should all strive for higher standards. The main issue for greenkeepers comes in trying to satisfy the expectations of the golfer who is often unaware of the conditions and resources available and who sometimes overlooks the increasingly unusual weather patterns. Communication helps, both at club level and nationally and it was good to hear Peter Alliss make reference to the budget and exclusiveness of play at Augusta which sets it apart from your typical club! What is BIGGA doing to help you may ask. The answer is that we continue to provide courses on effective communication, available to members and non-members, and we are working with the other national bodies in golf together with making information available to the media all in an attempt to raise the understanding of the challenges facing today's greenkeeping staff.

The Association together with the AGCS are making steady progress towards their goal of producing a Standard Health and Safety Management System and the joint working group met again in April. The greenkeeping representatives are Andy Campbell, Les Howkins, Gavin Robson and Tony Smith and their commitment and contribution is appreciated. The next step will be to invite current Health and Safety consultants to a meeting in May in order to seek their support for the project and give them an outline of progress to date. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Ransomes Jacobsen Limited who have agreed to support financially the final product that will be available to members over the internet in due course.

Ransomes have also agreed to support the 2006 Environment Competition in conjunction with existing sponsors Syngenta and Scotts and I am also pleased that Course Care are joining the list of sponsors for this event for the first time. The responsible management of the environment is an important part of all our lives and I hope that members and their golf clubs will give maximum support to the competition.

I have received confirmation that John Deere Limited will this year resume the running of their national golf competition, the John Deere Team Championship, which will follow the format of previous years in so far as there will be local dealer sponsored knockouts culminating in a national final at the East Sussex National Golf Club in September. The lucky winners of the final will be invited to play in the John Deere World Championship in Georgia, USA (not at Augusta I hasten to add!) in November, an event not to be missed I am reliably told. John Deere have again pledged £25 to BIGGA for every dealer-sponsored team entered in the UK that will be used to support education for BIGGA members.

I, and my colleagues at HQ, are planning our Section and Region visits for this year and I will publish a list of events that we intend attending on the members' bulletin board and in the June edition of Greenkeeper International. We look forward to meeting faces old and new and I hope that members will take the opportunity to meet us.

John Pemberton

40 Greenkeeper International

SCOTTISH REGION

The 2006 Scottish National Tournament will be held at Leven Links, Leven, Fife on Thursday June 22 2006 by kind permission of the Leven Links Joint Committee. The cost of the event will be £22, which includes coffee/tea, filled roll, evening meal and prizes. Apprentice fee will be £12.

Entry forms are available at all Section Spring Outings and from the Regional Administrator.

All entries with remittance must be sent to the Regional Administrator, Peter J. Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6TA by Tuesday 13 June 2006. Cheques made payable to BIGGA Scottish Region.

Peter J. Boyd

Ayrshire

New members to the Section this month are Robbie MacDonald, Brodick GC, and Mark Hodgson, Turnberry. This brings us up to about 125 in total which is a good increase from just a few year's ago.

The Spring Outing at Southerness will have been played and results will appear in next month's notes.

Western Gables plays host in the Autumn on Wednesday 27th September with tee times from 2pm. The outing will also decide this year's winner of the prestigious Harry Diamond Jug as sponsored by Daval Products.

June 22 is the date for the annual Scottish Greenkeepers' Championship and will be contested over Leven Links GC, in Fife, so good luck to the Ayrshire contingent heading over.

The National Conference in Dunfermline was a resounding success once again, not surprising though with the quality of speakers. Our thanks to Peter Boyd for his work in organising the day. Then to cap it off Mr Brown took us for beers. Ya dancer!

Anyone interested in playing football against the West can contact myself or team manager, Marshall Sloss. We are hoping to get the game played in May so be quick or else Iain might have to play again?

In early October we are planning a little golf match against some of the lads from Northern Ireland. Probably a Friday afternoon game in the Irvine area, with possibly a few light refreshments taken afterwards in the quaint town of Ayr. I'll let you all know more of the details as things progress but anyone interested just get in touch with me on 07939104701 or by e mail at denis.t@hotmail.co.uk.

Dennis Tweddell

East

I am writing this report in early April, with my wife whispering in my ear to remain quiet, as we have our usual visitors in the form of two lesser spotted woodpeckers to our bird feeder. A beautiful bird close up, it is extremely shy.

A man operating a revolving door system this month is Steven Halliday, head man at Melville Golf Centre, with the departure on a free transfer of Shai' Cunningham to Mortonhall Golf Club, Making his debut at Melville is John Shaw who has spent the last two years with the SRU at Murrayfield.

The new Deputy Course Manager at Cardrona is Bruce Watson who has been working at the Archerfield Estate for the past 18 months. A former head man at Selkirk Golf Club, Bruce commenced his greenkeeping career at Moffat Golf Club under the expert tutorship of Robin Macmillan.

The National Conference in early March was held in Dunfermline but the attendance from the East Region was disappointing. Only 10 members attended.

I must apologise (or causing Kevin to have kittens when in the last edition I gave the wrong date for the Spring Outing. sincerely hope it did not cause too much upset.

I promised two editions ago some input from Ian Kinky on his trip to Atlanta. The following with the odd adjustment is a report sent to me via email by Ian:

'I am in the middle of stripping the putting green ready for constructing a new one once the scaffolding comes down from around the new clubhouse, perfect timing eh, so this will be quick, short and sweet! We need to crack on if we are not careful it will stop raining and we'll be working whilst not soaked to the skin, and that will never do.

Atlanta 10 BIGGA delegates from around the UK, only person representing Scotland was me, an Englishman living here, although there was a Scottish fellow working in